



## Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

### Caffeine

Many of us consume caffeine on a daily basis, but how much do we really know about it? To start, caffeine is a substance found mostly in beverages like coffee, tea, and soft drinks. It can be found in other food items and medications as well. It occurs naturally in tea, coffee, and cocoa beans. Caffeine is added to soft drinks and some medications such as: pain relievers, diet pills, and cold medicines. Caffeine is a stimulant which can help us feel more alert but, also affects the body's metabolism, stimulates the nervous system, and acts as a diuretic.

Caffeine is absorbed by the body and passes quickly into the brain. It is not stored in the body. The body gets rid of caffeine through urination.

For most people, the amount of caffeine in two to four cups of coffee a day is not harmful. This is equivalent to about 200–300 mg of caffeine per day. However, some people are more sensitive to caffeine than others. If you are one of these people, you may be more likely to experience the side effects of caffeine which include:

- A fast heart rate
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty sleeping
- Nausea
- Restlessness
- Tremors
- Urinating more often
- Vomiting



Caffeine may also affect blood pressure by causing a temporary but dramatic increase. If you are concerned that you are experiencing any of these caffeine related side effects, talk to your doctor.

Since caffeine acts as a diuretic, this means that we will urinate more and therefore have increased water loss. If dehydration is a problem for you, you may want to consider decreasing your caffeine intake.

Caffeine is sometimes thought to help with weight loss. However, there is no evidence to support this. Intake of large amounts of caffeine may lead to side effects.

There is no nutritional need for caffeine. It can be limited in the diet by choosing decaffeinated or caffeine free products.

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Stopping caffeine abruptly may cause withdrawal symptoms, such as:

- Drowsiness
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Reduce your intake gradually to lessen these symptoms.

## Caffeine Content of Foods

Caffeine content of foods vary by brand. An eight ounce serving of coffee can range from 60 milligrams for a weaker brew to 180 milligrams for a stronger brew. An eight ounce serving of cola has about 25 milligrams of caffeine. Ten bite size pieces of chocolate contain about 10 milligrams of caffeine. Some medications can have as much as 150—200 milligrams of caffeine per dose.

Decaffeinated products may contain small amounts of caffeine. Since caffeine occurs naturally in coffee and tea, some caffeine still remains after the decaffeination process. Decaffeinated coffee and tea contain about two to four milligrams per cup.

The amount of caffeine is not required to be listed on the food label. However, if caffeine is added to a food, it must be listed in the ingredients list. Therefore,

you can tell if caffeine is added by looking at the nutrition facts label. The actual amount of caffeine contained in a particular product can be obtained by contacting the manufacturer or reviewing the manufacturers website.

Nutrition Facts		Amount/Serving	% DV*	Amount/Serving	% DV*
Serv Size 1 Tbsp (14g) Servings: About 24 <b>Calories 80</b> Calories from Fat 80		<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>12%</b>	<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
		Sat Fat 2.5g	<b>13%</b>	<b>Sodium</b> 85mg	<b>4%</b>
		Trans Fat 0g		<b>Total Carb</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
		Polyunsat Fat 3g		Sugars 0g	
		Monounsaturat Fat 2.5g		<b>Protein</b> 0g	
		Vitamin A 15% • Vitamin D 15%			
		Vitamin B6 35% • Vitamin B12 20% • Vitamin E 15%			
		*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.			
		Not a significant source of dietary fiber, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron			

**INGREDIENTS:** Natural Oil Blend (palm fruit, soybean, fish, canola and olive oils), water, plant sterols; contains less than 2% of salt, sorbitan esters of fatty acids, monoglycerides of vegetable fatty acids, natural and artificial flavors, TBHQ (to preserve freshness), potassium sorbate, lactic acid, soy lecithin, vitamin B12, vitamin E acetate, vitamin B6, beta carotene (color), vitamin A palmitate, calcium disodium EDTA, **Caffeine**

### For more information:

- ChooseMyPlate.gov—<http://www.choosemyplate.gov>
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans—<http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines>
- Food and Drug Administration—<http://www.fda.gov>
- National Library of Medicine—<http://www.nlm.nih.gov>

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